

St. Corban's B.N.S.

Fairgreen

Naas

Co. Kildare



Policy on Equal Opportunity & Gender Equity 2019

Introductory Statement:

This policy document was drawn up;

- To ensure equality of access and opportunity to all pupils and staff in the school environment
- To ensure that no unfair condition be allowed hinder a person's participation in school life

Policy formation was a collaborative exercise between staff, Board of Management, parents and children.

Rationale:

The Equal Status Acts 2000–2004, the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 and the Education Act 1998 call upon each school to outline a policy document that addresses equality of access and participation. The DES – Equality Authority booklet, *Schools and the Equal Status Act*, states that the school development plan “must contain equality objectives and identify the steps that will be taken to achieve them. It should be based on an identification of the educational needs of students across the Nine Grounds”. The nine grounds of discrimination are: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of Traveller Community.

All members of the St. Corban's B.N.S. community (students, parents, teachers, ancillary staff and visitors to the school), are included within the scope of this document. It centres on the nine grounds in which equality legislation prohibits discrimination and promotes equality.

The policy was re-drafted because;

- The existing policy was originally drafted in 2000 and required updating
- Legislation in relation to equality of access has been activated, such as the
 - Employment Equality Act 1998
 - Education Act 1998
 - Equality Status Act 2000
- To promote the principles of justice and equality for all in accessing and participating in the curriculum as provided by St. Corban's BNS.

Links to School Ethos:

St. Corban's BNS endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities where possible, regardless of physical disability, gender, race, religion or learning disability. We also commit to preparing each and every pupil for life by promoting value and respect for all. The school's mission statement promotes the spirit of inclusiveness and the principles of equality.

Aims and Objectives:

- To instil a sense of pride in our own culture whilst simultaneously cultivating an understanding of the value of cultural diversity
- Promoting equal opportunities in an environment where diversity is respected valued and celebrated
- Ensuring compliance with all requirements of legislation

Organisational Procedures

Enrolment:

All pupils are welcome to enrol regardless of race, religion, family status, disability or ethnicity while recognising that St. Corban's has a Catholic ethos. St Corban's BNS is a boys' only school and so it does not enrol girls.

Interviewing:

The Board of Management is an equal opportunities employer as per the Equal Status Act 2000, and the Employment Equality Act 1998. No discriminatory questions on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, family status etc. will be asked during the interview process. Correct procedures for promotion will be strictly adhered to as per the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association handbook and fair and equitable measures in relation to post of responsibility, maternity leave, career breaks, etc.

Communication:

While the school has a low percentage of foreign national children, verbal contact with parents of these children is the preferred mode of communication. The staff is also made aware of the different cultural practices of these parents/children through verbal communication. The school has a policy of communicating with both parents on pupil progress where divorce or separation is an issue, unless a court ruling prescribes differently. Parents must inform the school and agree arrangements for this process. Information will normally be given to the Primary caregiver but on request from another guardian it will be provided.

Input of Parents:

The Parents Association of the school have an input into the formulation of the Equality Policy. The Board of Management and Parents Association refer all parents to the Education Welfare Act 2000 at regular intervals through The Parents Information Booklet, newsletters and circulars which highlight issues such as;

- School procedures and code of behaviour
- School attendance, Tusla and absenteeism
- Multiculturalism, drug awareness, obesity etc. through organising talks for parents

Where possible, the school will also support parents on low income who are unable to afford books/ uniforms/school outings and refer them to where they can source assistance.

Induction and Teaching:

The school enrolment form gathers all the information the school will need to address issues of inequality, such as family background, medical concerns and learning or physical disabilities.

This enables the school to access relevant supports such as resource teachers, SNAs and teaching materials. There is regular communication between the class teacher and parents during the child's early school life. All teaching materials acquired are chosen and used in a manner reflecting diversity.

All teachers share information about their class which is updated annually. The school promotes non-academic activities such as hurling, football, soccer, swimming etc in a manner which is favourable to all races and religions. Classes are split (where necessary) on a non-academic, non-gender basis in the best interest of all the children. Special efforts are made to avoid stereotyping when designating tasks and presenting classroom materials. Each teacher also conducts formal lessons on equality and gender equity as part of Social Personal and Health Education.

Curriculum Access:

The school endeavours to enable all pupils to access all curricula which shall enable pupils to engage in appropriate intellectually stimulating work. All children are given an opportunity to engage in integration and appreciate other cultures and languages. Special arrangements are made for children of non-nationals and children with specific learning difficulties in relation to the teaching of Irish. Exemptions are sought for children who qualify for them, subject to parental consent and in keeping with the professional recommendation of the class teacher and other professionals. Social, Environmental and Scientific Education offers many areas where diversity and differences can be celebrated. Geography lessons will focus on people, food and the physical features of other countries. S.P.H.E strands such as 'Myself and Others' are also used to celebrate different cultures.

Special Needs:

The school has Learning Support Teachers and Resource Teachers. Children with special needs in mainstream have access to learning support and resource hours in addition to full time mainstream integration. Children with special needs will be educated in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to the school.

Evaluation of Policy:

The policy is subject to continual review under the following headings;

- All pupils accessing the curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs
- Increased awareness of difference and acceptance of same
- Maintaining a happy school atmosphere
- Staff and parental satisfaction
- Improvement in pupil attainment level in academic and social areas

Communication

A copy of this policy has been given to each teacher and is available for parents to view in the school.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in 2019.

Signed: 
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 9/5/19.